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ABSTRACT

Community colleges serve more than half of all entering freshmen, half of all the women seeking higher education, and more minorities than all of the 4-year colleges and universities combined. Serving this population, the leaders and policy makers of community colleges must recognize the reasons for the underrepresentation of minorities in college degree programs and be prepared to make changes that will provide equal educational opportunities for minority groups. College completion rate studies show that attrition is a serious problem for minority students. Studies of transfer policy have isolated some specific problems that contribute to the diminishing transfer rate: poor communication of transfer requirements to students, lack of information systems for counselors who advise transfer students, the complex admissions and registration procedures, and lack of financial assistance--the most frequently cited reason for dropping out. Many community colleges have initiated programs to remedy these problems. The successful programs, characterized by partnerships of community colleges with high schools and 4-year colleges, can provide guidelines for community college policy makers, who have a responsibility to rethink basic assumptions about the needs of minority students and develop programs that promote educational equity. (JHZ)

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UNDERREPRESENTATION OF MINORITIES WHO TRANSFER TO BACCALAUREATE INSTITUTIONS

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MINORITY AFFAIRS ASSEMBLY LUNCHEON

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

Friday, October 12, 1984

Compliments of Max Castillo

WHEN I WAS ASKED TO SPEAK TO YOU TODAY ON THE ISSUE OF UNDERREPRESENTATION OF MINORITIES WHO TRANSFER TO BACCALAUREATE INSTITUTIONS, I JUMPED AT THE OPPORTUNITY MAINLY FOR TWO REASONS:

1. IT IS CURRENTLY A VERY CRITICAL ISSUE FOR US IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES IN VIEW OF OUR ROLE AND MISSION AS COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS; AND SECONDLY:

2. IT WAS ALSO AN OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW SOME OF THE RESEARCH IN AN ATTEMPT TO ISOLATE THE REASONS FOR THIS UNDERREPRESENTATION, AND TO SHARE WITH YOU SOME IDEAS AND INFORMATION ON WHAT OTHER INSTITUTIONS ARE DOING IN RESPONSE TO THE TRANSFER FUNCTION.

LUNCHEON KEYNOTERS ARE VERY MUCH LIKE THE LATE NIGHT BOARD MEETINGS YOU ALL KNOW SO MUCH ABOUT. EVERYONE IS TRYING HARD TO FOCUS ON THE DIFFICULT ISSUES, THE NUMBERS, AND THE "BOTTOM LINE," BUT STRUGGLING VERY HARD TO STAY AWAKE. WHAT I WOULD LIKE TO DO, THEN, IS BEGIN BY HAVING YOU DO A LITTLE VISUAL IMAGERY THEN FOLLOWUP WITH SOME FACTS THAT YOU CAN APPLY TO THE MENTAL PICTURE OF WHAT EXISTS IN YOUR OWN COMMUNITY. SO, PUT YOUR DESSERT SPOON (FORK) DOWN FOR JUST A MOMENT, AND PICTURE, IF YOU WILL, A RAMBLING PIPELINE. LET US SAY THAT THE PIPELINE EMPTIES FROM VARIOUS CONSTITUENTS OF THE COMMUNITY AT YOUR ASSIGNED SEAT IN THE BOARDROOM. IT RUNS FROM YOUR SEAT TO THE CHANCELLOR'S OR PRESIDENT'S OFFICE, TO THE VICE PRESIDENT OR DEAN, THROUGH THE CLASSROOM PAST THE TEACHER, AND FINALLY OUT OF THE CAMPUS. AT YOUR CAMPUS DOORSTEP, CONTINUE TO FOLLOW THE PIPELINE TO THE MULTIPLE PATHS IT TAKES TO THE VARIOUS COLLEGES TO WHICH WE THINK OUR STUDENTS ARE GOING. IF YOU HAVE A PICTURE, HOLD IT.

WE CAN ALL CALL TO MIND WHO IT IS WE SERVE, THAT IS, THE STUDENTS WHO TRAVEL THROUGH THAT PIPELINE. IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES, THE SPECIFIC GROUPS INCLUDE MORE THAN HALF OF ALL ENTERING FRESHMAN, HALF OF ALL THE WOMEN SEEKING HIGHER EDUCATION,

AND MORE MINORITIES THAN ALL OF THE FOUR YEAR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES COMBINED. THERE ARE BARRIO AND GHETTO YOUTHS, WELFARE MOTHERS, LAID-OFF WORKERS AND "EMPTY-NESTERS" RETURNING TO COLLEGE; AND IN MANY CASES, WITH THEIR SONS AND DAUGHTERS.

DEMOGRAPHICALLY, THE COUNTRY IS WITNESSING EXPLOSIVE CHANGES WHICH WILL IMPACT EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THE COLLEGE SYSTEMS ON WHOSE BOARDS YOU SERVE. FOR SOME, IT WILL MEAN DIMINISHED ENROLLMENTS; FOR OTHERS IT WILL MEAN DEFUNCT SYSTEMS WHICH NO LONGER MATCH THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS IN THE PIPELINE. FOR ALL OF US WHO MONITOR AND SERVICE THE PIPELINE--THE DEMOGRAPHICS MERIT INTENSE EXAMINATION. THE 1983 REPORT OF THE AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION FORUM SPEAKS, SPECIFICALLY, TO THE CHANGING ETHNIC POPULATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL POLICY. ALTHOUGH THERE IS GROWING RECOGNITION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF SUCH DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES, THERE IS ALSO APPREHENSION THAT THIS SOCIETY'S MAJOR INSTITUTIONS ARE NOT RESPONDING QUICKLY OR ADEQUATELY ENOUGH IN DEVELOPING POLICIES THAT WILL MAXIMIZE THE CONTRIBUTIONS TO BE MADE BY THE ESCALATING NUMBERS OF MINORITIES IN THE POPULATION.

THE AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION REPORT INCLUDES SOME SIGNIFICANT BITS OF DATA THAT MERIT REVIEW. TO EACH DATA BIT WHICH THIS REPORT POINTS OUT, I WOULD SUGGEST A QUESTION--QUESTIONS WHICH AS DIAGNOSTICIANS OF THE PIPELINE--REQUIRE INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVE, COLLECTIVE UNDERSTANDING, AND A UNITIVE BIAS FOR ACTION.

IF, AS ONE OF THE DATA BITS INDICATES:

THE AVERAGE AGE OF THE WHITE POPULATION IS GROWING OLDER, WHILE THE MINORITY POPULATION IS GROWING YOUNGER

THEN:

WHAT ARE WE DOING TO ENSURE THE EDUCATION OF MINORITIES IN WHOSE CARE THE NATION WILL BE FOR THE DECADES TO COME?

IF, AS A SECOND DATA BIT INDICATES:

MINORITIES REPRESENT THE MAJORITY OF SCHOOL ENROLLMENTS IN 23 OF 25 OF THE NATION'S LARGEST CITIES

THEN:

HOW WILL CITIES, BOARD MEMBERS, AND COLLEGE ADMINISTRATORS FORM THE PARTNERSHIPS NECESSARY TO CERTIFY THAT BLACKS, HISPANICS, AND OTHER MINORITIES EXIT THE PIPELINE AT GREATER RATES THAN THE DISMAL NUMBERS PRESENTLY SHOW?

IF, AS A THIRD DATA BIT INDICATES:

EIGHTY PERCENT OF ALL MINORITIES WHO HOLD PH.D'S ARE IN EDUCATION AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

THEN:

HOW ARE COLLEGES ENRICHING THE EXPERIENCES AND RAISING THE AWARENESS OF MINORITIES TO PROVIDE THE BALANCE IN THE SCIENCES, THE HUMANITIES, AND THE FINE ARTS THAT MAKE THIS NATION A WHOLE?

OTHER DATA TELLS US THAT, PRESENTLY, MINORITIES JUST AREN'T MAKING IT AT A RATE WHICH WILL ALLOW THE COUNTRY TO COMPETITIVELY ADVANCE ITS GOALS IN DEFENSE, RESEARCH, TECHNOLOGY, INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT, AND SO ON. DESPITE INCREASES IN ABSOLUTE NUMBERS OF BLACK AND HISPANIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES AND COLLEGE ENROLLEES IN RECENT YEARS, ONLY ONE IN FOUR FRESHMEN INTENDING TO GET A BACCALAUREATE DEGREE ACTUALLY DOES SO.

COMPLETION RATE STUDIES INDICATE THAT IN 1970, 4.5 PERCENT OF ALL BLACKS TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AND OLDER HAD COMPLETED FOUR OR MORE YEARS OF COLLEGE--LESS THAN HALF THE 11.6 PERCENT COMPLETION RATE FOR WHITES IN THE SAME AGE COHORT. BY 1981, THE COMPLETION RATE FOR BOTH RACES HAD INCREASED, BUT THE GAP BETWEEN THEM REMAINED IN AN 8.2 PERCENT COMPLETION RATE FOR BLACKS AND 17.8 PERCENT COMPLETION RATE FOR WHITES. THE COMPARABLE STATISTIC FOR HISPANICS IN 1981 WAS 7.7 PERCENT.

A SERIOUS EROSION HAS ALSO OCCURRED IN THE RATES OF BLACK AND HISPANIC COLLEGE ENROLLMENTS AS A PERCENT OF THE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES IN THEIR POPULATIONS.

DATA INDICATE THAT THE HISPANIC RATE FELL FROM 35.4 PERCENT TO 29.9 PERCENT FROM 1975-1980. FOR BLACKS, THE FIGURES WERE 32.0 TO 27.8 PERCENT; FOR WHITES, 32.4 TO 32.0 PERCENT.

THE 1982 STUDY BY ALEXANDER ASTIN ON MINORITIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION SHARPENS THE ISSUE OF TRANSFER, WHEN HE NOTES THAT ONE CAN ATTRIBUTE MINORITY UNDER-REPRESENTATION TO PROGRESSIVE RATES OF ATTRITION FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE. AN ILLUSTRATION OF THIS PROBLEM IS CITIED IN A RECENT UCLA STUDY: OF 100 HISPANIC YOUNGSTERS THAT ENTERED GARFIELD HIGH SCHOOL IN LOS ANGELES, ONLY 18 GRADUATED FROM A FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTION. THEIR ROUTE FROM GARFIELD PROGRESSED TO A LOS ANGELES COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND, FINALLY, TO CALIFORNIA STATE COLLEGE. FORTY PERCENT WERE LOST IN HIGH SCHOOL AND HALF OF THE REMAINING SIXTY PERCENT WERE LOST IN THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE.

SO WHEN WE VIEW THE ISSUE OF TRANSFER WITHIN THIS CONTEXT, WE CAN CONCLUDE THAT ATTRITION IS THE MAJOR PROBLEM THAT CONTRIBUTES TO THIS UNDERREPRESENTATION. HOWEVER, A NUMBER OF STUDIES THAT HAVE BEEN CONDUCTED ON THE TRANSFER FUNCTION HAVE ISOLATED SOME SPECIFIC PROBLEMS THAT ALSO CONTRIBUTE TO THE DIMINISHING TRANSFER RATE; AND THESE ARE:

1. THE POOR COMMUNICATION OF TRANSFER REQUIREMENTS TO STUDENTS;
2. THE LACK OF INFORMATION SYSTEMS FOR COUNSELORS WHO ADVISE TRANSFER STUDENTS;
3. THE COMPLEX ADMISSIONS AND REGISTRATION PROCEDURES TO WHICH WE SUBJECT STUDENTS;
4. AND, THE MOST FREQUENTLY CITED REASON FOR DROPPING OUT OF THE PIPELINE, THE LACK OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.

EVEN MORE OFTEN, STUDENTS ARE TRAPPED IN THE PIPELINE DUE TO THE GROSS LACK OF AGREEMENT ON TRANSFERRABILITY BETWEEN THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND TRANSFER INSTITUTION. STUDENTS MAY BE DENIED ADMISSION TO CERTAIN "IMPACTED" PROGRAMS AT SPECIFIC COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES. "IMPACTED" PROGRAMS ARE THOSE IN WHICH THE APPLICANTS FAR EXCEED THE CAPACITY. PREDICTABLY, IMPACTED PROGRAMS ARE THOSE WHICH HAVE THE BEST SUCCESS FOR JOB OPPORTUNITIES AFTER GRADUATION. THE MOST COMMON ARE USUALLY ENGINEERING, COMPUTER SCIENCES, AND BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION--THE VERY ONES IN WHICH MINORITIES ARE UNDERREPRESENTED.

INSPECTION OF THE PIPELINE REVEALS THAT WE ARE NOT DOING A GOOD JOB OF PREPARING STUDENTS FOR VIGOROUS ACADEMIC WORK. WHILE STUDIES SHOW THAT WE ARE MAKING SOME PROGRESS IN TEACHING STUDENTS TO READ AND WRITE, THE SAME STUDIES SHOW A LACK OF HIGH-ORDER THINKING SKILLS. THE RESULT IS THAT MINORITY STUDENTS EITHER CANNOT MEET TRANSFER REQUIREMENTS OR THEY PERFORM IN A SUBSTANDARD FASHION IF THEY DO.

THE FIRST GENERATION OF COLLEGE-EDUCATED MINORITY STUDENTS HAVE STILL NOT EMERGED IN SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS TO CREATE THE BASE OF SUPPORT BOTH IN THE HOME AND IN THE WORKPLACE THAT IS CRITICAL TO MODELING THE LIFE OF A STUDENT. THE MAJORITY OF MINORITY STUDENTS ARE STILL FIRST-TIME COLLEGE ATTENDEES, REPRESENT A LOWER INCOME LEVEL, AND ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE WORKING AND STUDYING. WITH THESE CHARACTERISTICS, FEW MINORITY STUDENTS SUCCESSFULLY NEGOTIATE THEIR WAY THROUGH THE SYSTEM OF A COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND THE COMPLEX TRANSFER FUNCTION.

A NUMBER OF STUDIES HAVE ALSO SHOWN THAT THOSE COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS THAT DO TRANSFER, WHEN COMPARED WITH "NATIVE" STUDENTS (THOSE ENTERING A UNIVERSITY IMMEDIATELY FROM HIGH SCHOOL) IN THE AREAS OF PERSISTENCE, PERFORMANCE, AND PROGRESS TEND TO PERFORM LESS WELL THAN NATIVE STUDENTS. ONE IMPORTANT CONCLUSION THAT CAN BE DRAWN IS THAT, ONCE THE INITIAL "TRANSFER SHOCK" IS OVER, JUNIOR AND COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS' GRADE POINT AVERAGE'S (GPA'S) DO INCREASE AND THEREFORE THOSE-STUDENTS HAVE A EXCELLENT CHANCE OF SUCCESS.

A PREVAILING TREND THAT HAS ALSO OCCURRED IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES IS THAT THEIR ORIGINAL ROLE OF PREPARING STUDENTS FOR TRANSFER TO FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS HAS SHIFTED FROM TRANSFER TO OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION AND TECHNOLOGY. THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT COMMUNITY COLLEGE'S HAVE ABANDONED THE TRANSFER FUNCTION; ON THE CONTRARY WE HAVE RETAINED IT, BUT IN A SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT FASHION. IN MANY COMMUNITY COLLEGES, THE STUDENTS HAVE SHOWN MORE CONCERN WITH THE COURSE THAN WITH THE PROGRAM, PARTICULARLY IN OCCUPATIONAL PROGRAMS. FEWER STUDENTS ATTEND IN A LINEAR MANNER AND A GREATER NUMBER OF STUDENTS ATTEND CLASSES AS PART-TIMERS ENROLLED IN A TRANSFER CURRICULUM, OR IN AREAS OF TECHNOLOGY WHICH SHOW INCREASING POTENTIAL FOR TRANSFER. THIS REQUIRES A MORE TOTAL APPROACH TO ARTICULATION, THE RE-ALIGNMENT OF SUPPORT SERVICES, AND THE INCREASED VALUING BY FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES OF THE COMBINED TECHNICAL AND WORK SKILLS MANY PART-TIME STUDENTS TYPICALLY BRING TO THE UNIVERSITY SETTING. AS A MATTER OF FACT, THE COMMISSION ON THE HIGHER EDUCATION OF MINORITIES GOES SO FAR AS TO RECOMMEND THAT COMMUNITY COLLEGES REVITALIZE THEIR TRANSFER FUNCTION BY ESTABLISHING AS ONE OPTION, A "TRANSFER-COLLEGE-WITHIN-A-COLLEGE"; WHEREIN ALL STUDENTS ASPIRING TO A BACCALAUREATE CAN BE BROUGHT TOGETHER AND EXPOSED TO THE SAME KINDS OF INTENSIVE EDUCATIONAL AND EXTRACURRICULAR EXPERIENCES COMMONLY AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS IN UNIVERSITY SETTINGS. FUNDING FORMULAS MAY HAVE TO BE REVISED TO STRENGTHEN THE "COLLEGE-WITHIN-A-COLLEGE."

HOW DO WE REPAIR THE LEAKS IN THE PIPELINE? WHAT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES DO WE USE TO SEAL IT--TO PREVENT THE SEEPAGE OF HUMAN POTENTIAL? IN EXAMINING SOME OF THE SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES, I, MODESTLY, BEGIN AT SAN ANTONIO COLLEGE. THE HIGH TECHNOLOGY HIGH SCHOOL CONCEPT BEGAN BY BRINGING IN PREDOMINANTLY MINORITY JUNIORS AND SENIORS FROM SOME OF THE CITY'S MORE DEPRESSED SCHOOL DISTRICTS FOR HALF A DAY OF INTENSIVE INSTRUCTION IN MATH, SCIENCE, LOGIC, COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY, AND TECHNICAL & SCIENTIFIC WRITING. ALL COURSES ARE TAUGHT BY OUR OWN COLLEGE FACULTY. BEGINNING ITS SECOND YEAR, WE ARE NOW SERVING FRESHMEN AND SOPHOMORES, AND IN 1985-86, WE WILL BE IMPLEMENTING PHASE II OF THE HIGH TECHNOLOGY HIGH SCHOOL

WHICH WILL PROVIDE A CAREER-SPECIFIC OPTION.

THE COLLEGE PREP PRE-ENGINEERING PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT SAN ANTONIO SERVES 450 YOUNGSTERS DURING THE SUMMER REPRESENTING BOTH MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOLS. OUR COLLEGE PROVIDES FACULTY SUPPORT FOR THIS PROGRAM AND MANY OF THESE YOUNGSTERS BECOME OUR STUDENTS AT SAN ANTONIO COLLEGE BRINGING INTO OUR SYSTEM A PREDISPOSITION AND LINK FOR TRANSFER.

AT MIAMI DADE COMMUNITY COLLEGE THERE IS THE EXPERIMENTAL CHALLENGE CENTER; SINCE THE RIGHT-TO-FAIL POLICY WAS ABANDONED IN THE 1970'S, 19% OF MIAMI DADE'S FULL-TIME STUDENTS HAVE BEEN COMPLETING THEIR DEGREES, A RELATIVELY HIGH FIGURE AMONG COMMUNITY COLLEGES; AND TRANSFER TO 4-YEAR INSTITUTIONS ARE AT 5%. ADDITIONALLY, THE TRANSFER OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAM, FUNDED BY THE FORD FOUNDATION, HAS DEVELOPED A NUMBER OF STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE MINORITY STUDENTS CHANCES OF MOVING ON TO SENIOR COLLEGES.

AT LAWSON STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA, WHICH IS 99% BLACK, AN ARTICULATION EFFORT BEGAN WITH COLLEGE PROFESSORS AND HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS TO ADDRESS STATEWIDE COOPERATION BETWEEN SENIOR COLLEGES AND LAWSON STATE.

AT SAN ANTONIO COLLEGE, WE HAVE BEEN ENGAGED IN A SIMILAR EFFORT WITH LOCAL SENIOR INSTITUTIONS AND SPECIFICALLY THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT SAN ANTONIO, WHERE OUR FACULTY, COUNSELORS, AND DEPARTMENT CHAIRPERSONS HAVE BEEN COMPARING CURRICULUM AND CLASS SYLLABUS IN SELECTED DEGREE PROGRAMS THAT TRANSFER DIRECTLY TO THE UNIVERSITY. IN ESSENCE, WHAT WE HAVE ESTABLISHED IS AN "ARTICULATION HIT TEAM" THAT IS DEVELOPING NOT ONLY 2 + 2 DEGREE PROGRAMS WITH THE UNIVERISTY, BUT ALSO WITH OUR LOCAL SECONDARY SCHOOL SYSTEMS--AS I NOTED EARLIER AN EXAMPLE OF THIS BEING OUR HIGH TECHNOLOGY HIGH SCHOOL EFFORT.

LOS ANGELES COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT IS INVOLVED IN A PROGRAM ENTITLED PROJECT ACCESS. THIS PROGRAM PROVIDES ALL NEW STUDENTS WITH ASSESSMENT RESULTS OF

THEIR BASIC SKILLS FOR PROPER COURSE PLACEMENT AND CONTINUOUS COUNSELING.

THIS EFFORT, WHICH PARALLELS A SIMILAR PROGRAM WITH THE SAME TYPE OF ASSESSMENT AT OUR INSTITUTION, IS BASED ON THE CONCEPT THAT COLLEGES MUST BEGIN A SERIOUS PRE-ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT ENTRY LEVEL SKILLS AS A FIRST STEP IN PROVIDING COMPREHENSIVE COUNSELING AND ADVISING TO ENTERING STUDENTS. THE OUTCOME IS TO INCREASE RETENTION AND FACILITATE THE TRANSFER FUNCTION.

THE LIST OF SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMS CONTINUES IN ATLANTA; DENVER; PHOENIX; NEW JERSEY . . . THE COMMON THEMES THAT RUN THROUGH THESE PROGRAMS ARE SIMILAR TO THOSE FOUND IN PETERS AND WATERMAN'S IN SEARCH OF EXCELLENCE. FIRST, THEY ARE BUILT ON PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN THE ENTITIES WHO SERVICE THE PIPELINE. SECOND, THEY HAVE SMALL ADMINISTRATIVE BASES. OUR HIGH TECHNOLOGY HIGH SCHOOL AND ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE PROGRAMS, FOR EXAMPLE, WERE BUILT AND ARE DIRECTED BY FACULTY ON RELEASE TIME FROM THEIR DEPARTMENTS. IN BOTH, EVEN CLERICAL SUPPORT IS SHARED. AND THIRD, THE PROGRAMS DO A LOT WITH VERY LITTLE--THE GREATEST EXPENSE IS THAT OF TIME SPENT IN PLANNING, DIALOGUE, REFINING, AND IMPLEMENTING. FROM THAT, HAS FLOWED UNSOLICITED FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY WHICH LAST YEAR PRODUCED $100,000.00 IN DONATED EQUIPMENT.

THE PIPELINE HAS TRADITION. FOR YEARS IT HAS CARRIED STUDENTS FROM THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS TO THE COMMUNITY COLLEGES INTO THE UNIVERSITIES AND, FINALLY, TO THE EMPLOYING SECTOR THAT MANY OF YOU REPRESENT. IN RECENT YEARS THERE HAS BEEN STRESS ON THE SYSTEM. THE BREAKS HAVE PRODUCED UNEVEN FLOWS OF OUTPUT, COSTLY ALLOCATIONS OF RESOURCES, AND UNMET EXPECTATIONS ON THE PART OF STUDENTS. RETURN TO THAT THOUGHT YOU'VE BEEN HOLDING OF THE PIPELINE THAT RUNS THROUGHOUT YOUR CITY, YOUR CAMPUS, AND YOUR CLASSROOMS. IF THERE ARE NO CONNECTIONS OR THE CONNECTIONS ARE FAULTY, I HOPE THAT YOU WILL CONSIDER ANY OR ALL OF THE THEMES PRESENTED HERE TO BUILD PROGRAMS FOR THE UNIQUE COMMUNITIES YOU SERVE.

THE ESSENCE OF THE MESSAGE I'VE SHARED WITH YOU IS THAT AS POLICY-MAKERS, AND AS C.E.O.'S, WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO RETHINK AND CHALLENGE BASIC ASSUMPTIONS ON HOW WE ADDRESS THE EDUCATION NEEDS OF MINORITY STUDENTS IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES. SOMETIMES WE GET IN A "RUT" AND FIND IT DIFFICULT TO ADJUST OUR MODE OF OPERATING. I'M REMINDED OF NAISBITTS'S MEGATRENDS WHEN HE STATES: "COMPANIES, LIKE PEOPLE, FIND IT DIFFICULT TO CHANGE, MAINLY BECAUSE PEOPLE RUN COMPANIES." YOU GET STUCK IN YOUR WAYS.

THIS APPLIES TO EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AS WELL! I WOULD ARGUE, THEREFORE, THAT YOU CAN'T CHANGE UNLESS YOU COMPLETELY RECONCEPTUALIZE AND RETHINK WHAT YOU ARE DOING, AND UNLESS YOU HAVE A TOTALLY NEW VISION OF WHAT YOU PLAN TO DO.

AS POLICY-MAKERS, THEREFORE, THE CHALLENGE IS ONE OF DEVELOPING EDUCATION POLICY THAT ADDRESSES THE ISSUE OF EQUITY--POLICIES THAT ADDRESS THE EDUCATION NEEDS OF AN INCREASINGLY DIVERSE POPULATION.

IT IS OBVIOUS, AS THE A.C.E. REPORT POINTS OUT, THAT MINORITY POPULATION GROWTH MEANS INCREASED POLITICAL AND EDUCATIONAL POWER, AND THE INCREASED ABILITY TO INFLUENCE EDUCATION AND PUBLIC POLICY. THE PICTURE, ALTHOUGH NOT COMPLETE AND SOMEWHAT FRAGMENTED, IS NOT THAT BLEAK. BLACKS, HISPANICS, AND OTHER MINORITIES ARE MAKING SOME GAINS. WE JUST NEED TO UNDERSCORE THAT MUCH OF THE IMPRESSIVE PROGRESS THAT HAS BEEN MADE IN THAT VERY "LEAKY PIPELINE" HAS OCCURRED BECAUSE OF VISIONARY EFFORTS AT BOTH THE LOCAL AND NATIONAL LEVELS TO DEVELOP SPECIAL PROJECTS AND POLICIES THAT HAVE VERY SUCCESSFULLY TARGETED THE NEED FOR EQUALIZING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES; SOCIAL JUSTICE, AND EQUITY.